

We claim:

1. A method for absorbing leakage from an anus of a subject, comprising positioning an intergluteal absorbent pad external to the subject's anal orifice such that the pad is retained between the buttocks, so that discharge from the anus is absorbed by the absorbent material of the pad.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein the pad is held between the buttocks without adhesives or attachment to a supporting garment.
3. The method of claim 1, wherein the absorbent material is a highly absorbent non-swellable material.
4. The method of claim 1, wherein the pad has a uniform cross-section along its entire length or is tapered along its length.
5. The method of claim 1, wherein the pad has a minor portion superimposed on a major portion, the minor portion having a cross-sectional area smaller than a cross-sectional area of the major portion and wherein the minor portion is tapered to facilitate insertion between the subject's gluteals and retention in the intergluteal space, and a portion of the minor portion is positioned against the subject's anus.
6. The method of claim 5, wherein the minor and major portions of the pad have an elliptical cross-section with a major axis, wherein the major axis of the minor portion is less than the major axis of the major portion.
7. The method of claim 1, wherein the pad includes an agent for absorbing odors.
8. The method of claim 1, wherein the pad carries a therapeutically effective amount of a medicinal agent to be dispensed from the pad, and the subject is a subject in need of the medicinal agent.

9. The method of claim 8, wherein the medicinal agent is an anesthetic or a lubricant.

10. The method of claim 1 wherein the pad is placed between the buttocks of the subject to absorb excess leakage from the anus, and wherein the leakage comprises fecal material, glandular secretions, and/or blood.

11. The method of claim 1, wherein the pad is placed between the buttocks of the subject to absorb excess suppository leakage, flatulence, hemorrhoid bleeding, fissure bleeding, or fecal incontinence.

12. The method of claim 1, wherein the pad is placed external to the anal sphincter, against the anal orifice.

13. The method of claim 1, wherein the pad has a tapered leading edge that is inserted between the subject's buttocks to push the buttocks apart as the leading edge of the pad is inserted between the buttocks.

14. The method of claim 13, wherein the tapered leading edge is positioned against the anal orifice, and a remainder of the pad has a width which is wider than a normal anatomic intergluteal space, such that the remainder of the pad is frictionally engaged and retained by opposing gluteals.

15. The method of claim 14, wherein the pad is elongated and positioned adjacent and external to the anal orifice but not a vaginal orifice.

16. The method of claim 1, further comprising performing a diagnostic test on the discharge from the anus.

17. The method of claim 16, wherein the diagnostic test is an analysis of occult blood in a discharge including stool.

18. A method for absorbing leakage from a subject's anus, comprising inserting a pad into the subject's intergluteal space, positioning the pad adjacent to the subject's external anal orifice, such that leakage from the subject's anus is absorbed by the pad, wherein the pad is devoid of corners and flat surfaces intermediate its ends, and the pad has a minor portion superimposed on a major portion, the minor portion having a cross-sectional area smaller than a cross-sectional area of the major portion, wherein both the minor and the major portion are curvilinear in cross-section, and wherein the minor portion facilitates insertion between the subject's buttocks and retention in the anal space.

19. The method of claim 18, wherein the pad includes a medicinal or odor-absorbing agent.

20. The method of claim 18, wherein the pad is elongated and has a uniform cross-section along its entire length, or is tapered along its length.

21. The method of claim 20, wherein the pad is elongated, and, when placed in the intergluteal space, extends external to the anal orifice and a vaginal opening to absorb leakage from the vagina in addition to leakage from the anus.

22. The method of claim 18, wherein the pad carries a therapeutically effective amount of a medicinal agent, and positioning the pad comprises administering the medicinal agent to the subject.

23. The method of claim 22, wherein the medicinal agent is an anesthetic or a lubricant.

24. The method of claim 18, wherein the pad is placed between the buttocks of the subject to absorb excess leakage from the anus, and wherein the leakage comprises fecal material, glandular secretions, and/or blood.

25. The method of claim 18, wherein the pad is placed between the buttocks of the subject to absorb excess suppository leakage, flatulence, hemorrhoid bleeding, fissure bleeding, or fecal incontinence.

26. The method of claim 18, wherein the pad is placed external to the anal sphincter.

27. The method of claim 18, wherein the pad has a tapered leading edge that is inserted between the subject's buttocks to push the buttocks apart as the leading edge of the pad is inserted between the buttocks.

28. The method of claim 27, wherein the tapered leading edge is positioned against the anal orifice, and a remainder of the pad has a width which is wider than a normal anatomic intergluteal space, such that the remainder of the pad is frictionally engaged and retained by opposing gluteals.

29. The method of claim 18, further comprising performing a diagnostic test on the discharge from the anus.

30. The method of claim 29, wherein the diagnostic test is an analysis of occult blood in a discharge including stool.

31. A method for treating a symptom of a subject with hemorrhoids, comprising positioning an intergluteal elongated absorbent pad such that the pad is retained between the buttocks external to the subject's anus, wherein the pad comprises a longitudinally extending major portion and a longitudinally extending minor portion integrated with the posterior portion, wherein the minor portion has a smaller transverse section diameter relative to the larger transverse section diameter of the major portion, wherein the minor portion is designed for insertion of the pad between the subject's buttocks in the anatomic intergluteal space adjacent to the anus, and the major portion is attached to the anterior portion such that is retained between the buttocks, wherein insertion and retention of the pad adjacent to the anus alleviates a symptom of the hemorrhoids.

32. The method of claim 31, wherein the minor and major portions of the pad have a length greater than their width, and the shape of the pad substantially conforms to the intergluteal space in which the pad is retained.

33. The method of claim 31, wherein the pad is held between the buttocks without adhesives or attachment to a supporting garment.

34. The method of claim 31, wherein the major portion of the pad has longitudinally extending, opposed, substantially parallel face portions.

35. The method of claim 31, wherein the minor portion of the pad has longitudinally extending, opposed substantially parallel face portions.

36. The method of claim 35, wherein the opposed flat face portions of the pad are substantially parallel.

37. The method of claim 35, wherein the opposed flat face portions of the pad are substantially convergent.

38. The method of claim 31, wherein the minor portion of the pad has longitudinally extending, opposed substantially parallel face portions.

39. The method of claim 38, wherein the opposed flat face portions of the pad are substantially parallel.

40. The method of claim 38, wherein the opposed flat face portions of the pad are substantially convergent.

41. The method of claim 31, wherein the minor and major portions of the pad have a shoulder shaped junction.

42. The method of claim 31, wherein the pad carries a therapeutically effective amount of a medicinal agent, and positioning the pad comprises administering the medicinal agent to the subject.

43. The method of claim 42, wherein the medicinal agent is an anesthetic or a lubricant.

44. The method of claim 1, wherein the pad includes a cavity in which a medicinal agent is placed prior to positioning the pad.

45. The method of claim 44, wherein the cavity is compressed between the buttocks when the pad is positioned.

46. The method of claim 45, wherein the cavity communicates with an exterior surface of the pad.

47. The method of claim 46, wherein the cavity is a recess in an exterior surface of the pad.

48. The method of claim 44, wherein the pad is elongated, and the cavity extends longitudinally along the pad.